

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
Markup of H.R. 4342, the “Domain Openness Through Continued
Oversight Matters (DOTCOM) Act of 2014”
April 9, 2014**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

This afternoon we begin the mark up on the DOTCOM Act written by Rep. Shimkus and cosponsored by many members of this subcommittee. This good government bill is a common sense approach to an incredibly complex issue.

No committee of Congress has done more to stand up for freedom of the Internet from government intrusion than our subcommittee. We’ve twice passed legislation to make clear that the United States has no intention of letting foreign governments through the power of the United Nations seize control of the Internet.

We also have no intention of letting the Obama Administration cede oversight of the fundamental foundation of the Internet – address and naming authority – without the due diligence to ensure that these functions could not be co-opted by foreign entities that do not share our values.

Make no mistake about it, as recently as a week ago, we saw a foreign government turn off Twitter and YouTube ahead of an election in an effort to silence that government’s critics. We know what China has done to silence dissent, and we’ve read the statements of Vladimir Putin who wants to use the powers of the ITU to control the Internet. These threats are real.

American taxpayers paid to create the Internet. For many years, the Department of Defense contracted with the University of Southern California to manage the assignment of numbers and names. Later that authority was transferred to the Department of Commerce and through contract to ICANN.

I’ve read that 79 page contract and I urge my colleagues to do the same. It is obvious from the various requirements that past administrations, Republican and Democratic, wanted to guarantee Internet independence. Now, the Obama Administration is lunging down a path that is perilous and uncertain. The legislation before us today is simple: it tells the administration to pause and evaluate. The bill calls on the GAO to fully investigate any proposal to transfer authority over Internet naming and report back to Congress its findings before the Administration can take action.

Getting the facts and understanding the consequences of such a change in Internet management is the responsible action for us to take. It is what the American people expect us to do. We cannot take the administration’s proposal on blind faith. The future of the Internet is literally at stake.

###